

# **HUCKLEBERRY FINN SONGS**

**Three Songs for SAB Chorus and Piano**

**Music by Kurt Weill  
Lyrics by Maxwell Anderson**

**arranged by  
BRUCE TRINKLEY**

# HUCKLEBERRY FINN SONGS

1. Catfish Song	3
2. River Chanty	6
3. Apple Jack	13

## NOTES

**Kurt Weill** (1900-1950), a German composer, collaborated in the 1920's with the playwright Bertolt Brecht on a number of internationally famous works, most notably *The Threepenny Opera*. Fleeing Germany before the start of World War II, Weill settled in America and began writing for the Broadway stage. With his frequent collaborator Maxwell Anderson, Weill wrote *Knickerbocker Holiday* and *Lost in the Stars*, a musical version of the novel by Alan Paton about racial tensions in South Africa. Weill's final, unfinished, project was a musical version of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

**Maxwell Anderson** (1888-1959), American poet and playwright, became famous for introducing verse back into drama in a series of highly successful historical plays, including *Elizabeth the Queen* and *Mary of Scotland*. Perhaps his greatest work is the verse tragedy *Winterset*, a tale of a son's attempt to avenge his father's unjust execution, loosely inspired by the infamous Sacco-Vanzetti trial. Anderson's work weds a soaring lyricism to profound moral engagement. His plays were a staple of the Broadway stage through the 1920's and 30's and were frequently adapted for film.

**Mark Twain**, the pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), was one of America's favorite humorists, novelists and lecturers. His sharp wit punctured the platitudes and hypocrisies of Gilded Age America. Yet beneath the surface of his delightful comic stories lies a deep concern with nineteenth century social and racial inequalities. He put to great use as a writer his many experiences and occupations, especially as a riverboat worker on the Mississippi. Even his pen name is a riverboat term, referring to a depth of two fathoms, or 12 feet, the depth at which a riverboat is in safe water. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, first published in 1884, is considered by many as the great American novel. It solidified Twain's reputation as a novelist.

## GLOSSARY

River navigation on the Mississippi has its own lexicon, including terms for hazards encountered in riverboat travel. Following are some of the terms used in "River Chanty".

*towhead*, a sandbar or low-lying island in a river, especially one with a stand of trees.

*larboard*, the port, or left-hand side of a sailing vessel facing forward.

*mark*, a knot or piece of material placed at measured lengths along a lead line to indicate the depth of the water.

*snag*, a large, uprooted tree that has drifted down the river and become stuck in the riverbed. Also known as a *sawyer*.

*starboard*, the right-hand side of a sailing vessel as one faces forward.

*mark twain*, *quarterless twain*, *half twain*, terms denoting various depths of the water in the river.

*Mississippi Lady*, a riverboat.

*Soo San Marie*, a city in southern Ontario, Canada, opposite Upper Michigan. The correct spelling is Sault Sainte Marie.